



Parent Blocks

NEWSLETTER



"Providing resources to parents throughout West Virginia"

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Developmental Milestones for Preschoolers

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Preschool is a period of remarkable growth—socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively. Between ages 3 and 5, children rapidly develop skills that lay the foundation for later learning and independence. While every child

progresses at their own pace, understanding typical milestones helps parents and educators support healthy development and recognize when additional guidance may be beneficial. Developmental milestones offer a helpful way to track and celebrate prog-

ress as children grow.

Here are some tips for parents to encourage healthy development:

- Read together daily and point out letters, words, signs, and encourage questions.
- Offer open ended play such as dolls, blocks, dress up/pretend play, etc. These foster social, emotional, language, and cognitive growth.
- Provide opportunities for physical activity by engaging in outside/playground time, running, climbing, riding tricycles, and ball play.
- Encourage their independence by allowing them to practice dressing themselves, using utensils and meal times, and helping with simple chores. This helps boost their confidence and self-help skills.

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Developmental Monitoring and Screening



All young children need both developmental monitoring and developmental screening. Together, these help ensure a child's development is on track and can help children and families get support for concerns. Both involve looking for developmental milestones, which are things that most children can do by a certain age.

	DEVELOPMENTAL MONITORING	DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING
WHO	Everyone – families, other caregivers, and anyone working with young children	Healthcare and early childhood professionals trained in screening
WHAT	Look for developmental milestones	Look for developmental milestones
WHEN	Early childhood, especially from birth through 5 years	Developmental screening at least at 9, 18, and 30 months of age. Autism screening at least at 18 and 24 months of age. Additional screens can be done for concerns.
WHY	To help: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• celebrate a child's development• talk about a child's progress with doctors, child care providers, teachers, and other professionals• learn what to expect next• identify any concerns early	To find out: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• if a child needs more support; it is not always easy to know whether a child needs help with development• if further evaluation is recommended
HOW	With easy-to-use, free checklists – get yours at www.cdc.gov/Milestones	With a formal, validated developmental screening tool



All young children need both developmental monitoring and developmental screening.

Parents and families, the best person to track your child's development is you!

Share your child's [milestone checklist](#) and any related information from your child's care provider, teacher, or other professional with the doctor at every well-child visit.

Use the checklist that works best for you:

- [CDC's Milestone Tracker app](#), free from the App Store or Google Play
- [CDC's digital online checklist](#)
- [paper checklist](#) printed from www.cdc.gov/Milestones

What if a child is not reaching their milestones as expected, or families or providers have concerns?

Parents and families: Talk with your child's doctor about any concerns and ask about developmental screening.

Caregivers, child care providers, teachers, and other professionals: Encourage families to talk with their child's doctor about their child's development and ask about developmental screening.

For more information, go to www.cdc.gov/Concerned. Don't wait! Acting early can make a real difference.

Child development is a journey. Developmental monitoring and screening show you the way.

www.cdc.gov/ActEarly

1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)

Learn the Signs. Act Early.



Download CDC's free
Milestone Tracker app



The Impact of Technology on Young Children

The West Virginia Infant/Toddler Mental Health Association

www.nurturingwvbabies.org



In today's digital era, technology and screen media plays a big role in the lives of very young children, and will continue to do so for years to come. It is essential for families and caregivers to understand the potential challenges as well as the potential benefits of how screen time and digital play influences developmental milestones from birth to 3 years old. Balancing screen time with real-world interactions and physical play is key to fostering healthy growth and development.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES:

- **Delayed language development:** Excessive passive screen time can reduce opportunities for real-world interactions essential for language learning.
- **Attention and sleep issues:** Overexposure to screens, especially before bedtime, may disrupt sleep patterns and impact attention spans.
- **Reduced physical activity:** Screen time may replace active play, potentially affecting motor skills and overall health.
- **Social skills:** Screen time decreases critical face-to-face and real world interactions with people essential for critical social and emotional learning and building healthy relationships.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS:

When used appropriately, digital play can:

- Support early literacy skills using interactive apps.
- Enhance creativity and problem-solving via age-appropriate educational games.
- Foster parent-child bonding when caregivers co-play and discuss content.
- Enhance and expand on early learning concepts practiced with other types of hands-on play materials and experiences.

RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES

From the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the World Health Organization (WHO)

Birth to 18 months

Recommendation: Avoid screen time except video chatting with family.

Instead: Prioritize face-to-face interaction and play.

18 to 24 months

Recommendation: If parents want to introduce screen time, high-quality content with caregiver co-viewing.

Instead: Use screen media to enhance learning, not replace real experience.

2 to 5 years

Recommendation: Limit screen use to 1 hour per day of high-quality programming with caregiver co-viewing.

Instead: Encourage active engagement and relate content to life through co-viewing.

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR HEALTHY DIGITAL USE

Co-Engage: Participate in your child's digital play to enhance learning and provide content.

Set Boundaries: Create tech-free zones and times for the family, especially during meals and before bedtime.

Prioritize Physical Play: Encourage outdoor activities and hands-on exploration daily.

Choose Quality Content: Select apps and programs designed for developmental appropriateness.

Model Behavior: Demonstrate balanced technology use yourself.

What is considered technology?

Lots of tools and media fall under "technology" for young children including televisions, tablets, smartphones, educational apps, as well as electronic toys that have sounds and lights.